蜡烛灭掉的那一秒，水爬了上来

晚上写作业的时候，我忽然想起一个疑问：蜡烛点着以后，要是被杯子扣住，火会去哪儿？我听哥哥说过有个会吸水的杯子，杯子又没长嘴，怎么会吸水呢？我不信，可是又想知道，就去厨房找东西：一根生日蜡烛、一只旧盘子、一个直筒玻璃杯，还有一小碗水。

火柴我不敢划，请妈妈帮我点了蜡烛。我把蜡油滴几滴在盘子中间，趁热把蜡烛粘上去，它歪歪地站着，没倒。盘子里倒了一点水，刚刚盖住盘底，我又滴了一滴红墨水，想让水看得清楚些。水静静的，火苗也静静的，我的心比它们还要静。

我拿起玻璃杯，对准蜡烛直直地扣下去，杯口压在盘子上。火苗被关在杯子里，还在烧，可是已经矮了一截。我蹲下来，脸贴着杯壁看。它晃了两下，像喘了口气，脖子越伸越长，然后灭了。

就在灭的那一秒，盘子里的红水像被一只看不见的手推着，一点一点往杯子里爬，顺着杯壁往上爬，爬到蜡烛底下往上一指高的地方停住了。我在心里数：一指，两指。水真的爬上来了！杯子什么都没吸，水自己上去了。

我喊得太大声，全家都跑来了。爸爸让我再做一次，我故意换了个高杯子。蜡烛灭得一样快，水却只爬到更低的位置。我拿出小本子记了两行：大杯子，水爬得低；小杯子，水爬得高。为什么我还说不上来，可我把问题写在了旁边：杯子里的空气去哪儿了？它是不是被火用完了？

睡觉前，那个问题在我脑子里滚来滚去。我决定明天去科学办公室问问李老师，空气是不是也会累。床头柜上，蜡烛早就凉透了，凝成一座红色的小山，我觉得它替我保管着一个秘密，等着我明天去取答案。

The Moment the Candle Went Out, the Water Climbed Up

One evening while doing homework, a question popped into my head: where does the flame go if a lit candle is covered by a cup? My brother had once mentioned a cup that drinks up water. A cup has no mouth, so how could it suck anything? I did not believe it, but I wanted to find out. I went to the kitchen and hunted for things: a birthday candle, an old plate, a straight-sided glass cup, and a small bowl of water.

I was afraid to strike a match, so Mom lit the candle for me. I dripped hot wax in the middle of the plate and stuck the candle onto it. It stood crooked but did not fall. I poured water onto the plate, just enough to cover the bottom, and added a drop of red ink so the water would be easy to see. The water was still, the flame was still, and my heart was even stiller than both of them.

I picked up the glass cup, lowered it straight over the candle, and pressed its rim onto the plate. The flame was shut inside the cup, still burning, but already a

little shorter. I squatted down and watched it with my cheek against the glass. It flickered twice, as if taking a breath, stretched its neck longer and longer, and then went out.

At the very second it went out, the red water on the plate seemed pushed by an invisible hand. It climbed into the cup bit by bit, crawling up the glass wall, and stopped at a height about two fingers above the base of the candle. I counted in my head: one finger, two fingers. The water really had climbed! The cup sucked nothing, yet the water rose by itself.

I shouted too loudly, and the whole family came running. Dad asked me to try again, and this time I deliberately used a taller cup. The candle went out just as fast, but the water rose even lower. I took out my little notebook and wrote two lines: big cup, water rises low; small cup, water rises high. I could not explain why yet, but I wrote the question beside it: where did the air inside the cup go? Was it used up by the fire?

Before bed, that question kept rolling around in my head. I decided to ask Teacher Li at the science office tomorrow whether air gets tired too. On the nightstand, the candle had cooled into a small red hill. I felt it was keeping a secret for me, waiting for me to fetch the answer tomorrow.

儿子的鼻子贴在杯子上

吃过晚饭，儿子把我拉到饭桌边，宣布要做杯子吃水的实验。他摆出来的家当有：一根红蜡烛、一个盘子、一只喝茶的玻璃杯，还有一小碟兑了酱油的水。东西是他自己备的，连擦手的纸巾都铺好了，看来已经惦记了一整个下午。

他把打火机递给我，说：你点，剩下的我来。我懂他的意思，他怕火，可又不肯错过实验里的任何一步。我帮他把蜡烛粘在盘子中间，火苗立起来了。他先蹲下看了看蜡烛，然后端起杯子，对准火苗直直扣下，两只手扶着杯口，指头紧张得发白。

火苗在杯子里缩了缩，脖子一歪，灭了。酱油色的水顺着杯壁一点点往上爬。儿子的鼻子贴到了杯子上，呼出的气在玻璃上蒙出一小团雾，他赶紧用纸巾擦掉，再把脸凑得更近，好像怕错过水往上走的每一毫米。

水去哪儿了？它为什么要爬？是杯子喝的，还是火把它拽上去的？问题一个接一个，我几乎跟不上。我刚想把气压的道理讲给他听，又把话咽了回去，反问他：你觉得哪个杯子最能吸水？他跑去翻自己的水杯、牛奶杯，还有装饼干的大玻璃罐，在桌上一字排开。

那天晚上，蜡烛点了灭、灭了点，连着做了四回。牛奶杯不透明，他看不见水爬，皱起眉头把杯子举起来对着灯照；大罐子太高，水只挪了一点点。只有直筒玻璃杯里，水爬得最高。他用

自己的办法记下结果：画了四个杯子，在爬得最高的那个上面画了一个小圆圈。

后来他睡着了，梦里嘟囔了一句：杯子里的空气吃饱了。我笑着替他关上门。饭桌上，盘子中间还留着一圈红色的蜡，像一枚刚刚颁发过的奖章，谁也没舍得擦。

My Son's Nose Pressed Against the Cup

After dinner, my son pulled me to the dining table and announced he would do the experiment of the cup drinking water. His equipment: a red candle, a plate, a glass tea cup, and a small dish of water darkened with soy sauce. He had prepared everything himself, even laying out paper towels for wiping hands. Clearly he had been thinking about it all afternoon.

He handed me the lighter and said: you light it, I will do the rest. I understood. He was afraid of fire, yet refused to miss a single step. I helped him stick the candle onto the plate, and the flame stood up. He squatted first to study the candle, then lifted the cup, lowered it straight over the flame, and held the rim with both hands, his fingers white with tension.

The flame shrank inside the cup, tilted its neck, and went out. The soy-colored water crawled up the glass wall bit by bit. My son's nose pressed right against the cup. His breath fogged a small patch on the glass; he wiped it quickly with a paper towel and moved his face even closer, as if afraid to miss a single millimeter of the rising water.

Where did the water go? Why did it climb? Did the cup drink it, or did the fire pull it up? The questions came one after another, and I could barely keep up. I was about to explain air pressure, then swallowed the words and asked instead: which cup do you think drinks the most water? He ran off to fetch his water cup, his milk cup, and the big glass jar from the cookie tin, and lined them up on the table.

That night the candle was lit and blown out, blown out and lit again, four rounds in a row. The milk cup was opaque, so he could not see the water climb, and he frowned and held the cup up to the lamp. The big jar was too tall, and the water barely moved. Only in the straight-sided glass cup did the water climb the highest. He recorded the results his own way: he drew four cups and put a small circle above the one where the water rose highest.

Later he fell asleep, and in his dream he mumbled: the air inside the cup is full. I smiled and closed his door for him. On the dining table, a ring of red wax still sat in the middle of the plate, like a medal just awarded. Nobody had the heart to wipe it away.

科学小组里的那声哇

科学课还没上课，王老师提着一个托盘走进教室：蜡烛、盘子、玻璃杯、一小盆水，还有一盒火柴。她把托盘放在讲台上，说：今天由杯子做实验。全班一下子安静下来，三十多双眼睛都盯着那个托盘，连后排爱讲话的陈小宇都坐直了。

我们轮流上去做。第一个是林小雨。她划着火柴点了蜡烛，把蜡烛粘在盘子里，动作都很稳，可扣杯子的时候手抖了一下，杯底斜着搁在盘子上，留出一道小缝。蜡烛晃了晃就灭了，盘子里的水却纹丝不动，一滴也没有爬上来。林小雨愣在原地，手指揪着裙角，耳根都红了。王老师没有马上纠正，只问了一句：谁看出她刚才哪里不一样？

有人说杯子歪了，有人说底下有缝，有人说是空气从缝里跑进去捣乱。林小雨自己弯下腰去看那道缝，看完直起身，眼圈还有点红，可她重新拿起了杯子。这一次，她把杯口对准盘子，两只手压着杯沿，压得严严实实，一动也不动。

火苗在杯子里缩起来，脖子越伸越长，灭了。水顺着杯壁往上爬，爬呀爬，停在一指高的地方。全班整齐地发出一声哇，那声音大得连窗玻璃都像跟着抖了一下。林小雨站在讲台边，回座位的时候脚步轻快，经过的人都想跟她击掌。陈小宇把手举得高高的，喊了一声再来一遍，王老师真的让她再做了一次。这一次全班不喊哇了，都屏住呼吸盯着杯壁，只有水在悄悄地往上走，走得比第一次还稳。

轮到最后一个人做完，王老师把托盘举起来说：第一次水不爬，也是实验的一部分，它告诉我们杯子要扣严，缝里进空气，水就不爬。她在黑板上写下三个大字：别漏气。下课铃响了，我们走出教室，还在说那声哇。我觉得那声音不是我们喊出来的，是水从杯子里替我们喊出来的。

The Whole Class Said Wow at the Same Time

Science class had not officially started when Teacher Wang walked in carrying a tray: candles, plates, glass cups, a small basin of water, and a box of matches. She set the tray on the podium and said: today the cup will run the experiment. The class went silent at once. More than thirty pairs of eyes fixed on the tray, and even Chen Xiaoyu in the back row, who never stopped talking, sat up straight.

We took turns going up. The first was Lin Xiaoyu. She struck a match, lit the candle, and fixed it onto the plate, all of it steady. But when she lowered the cup, her hand trembled, and the cup rested crooked on the plate with a small gap under its rim. The candle flickered and went out, yet the water on the plate did not move at all, not a single drop climbing up. Lin Xiaoyu froze where she stood, fingers twisting the hem of her skirt, the roots of her ears red. Teacher Wang did not correct her right away. She only asked one question: did anyone notice what was different just now?

Some said the cup was tilted. Some said there was a gap underneath. Some said air sneaked in through the gap and spoiled the trick. Lin Xiaoyu bent down to look at the gap herself. When she straightened up, her eyes were still a little red, but she picked the cup up again. This time she lined the rim with the plate, pressed the edge with both hands, tight and firm, not moving at all.

The flame shrank inside the cup, stretched its neck longer and longer, and went out. The water climbed up the glass wall, climbing and climbing, and stopped at a height of one finger. The whole class let out a single loud wow, so big that even the window glass seemed to tremble with it. Lin Xiaoyu stood by the podium, and on her way back to her seat her steps were light, and everyone she passed wanted to high-five her.

After the last person finished, Teacher Wang lifted the tray and said: the first time the water refused to climb was also part of the experiment. It told us the cup must seal tight, because if air leaks in through a gap, the water will not rise. She wrote three big characters on the blackboard: no air leaks. The bell rang, and as we walked out of the classroom we were still talking about that wow. I felt the sound did not come from our throats. The water shouted it for us, from inside the cup.